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BRITISH COLUMBIA The Best Place on Earth | Ministry of Education | EDUCATION REPORT

Issue No. 51

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$48 Million to Build Green Schools in Revelstoke

Province Approves $15M for Richmond Elementary School

Mission StrongStart BC Centres Open for Preschoolers

Madeira Park Elementary Gets $1.4M Seismic Upgrade

Three Abbotsford StrongStart Centres Officially Open

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Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education

Last Friday I had the pleasure of presenting Lauren McDonald, a recent graduate of Cedars Christian School in Prince George, with the Governor General's Bronze Academic Medal. Considered to be one of the most prestigious awards that students in Canada can receive, bronze medals are awarded to students who achieve the highest average upon graduation from a secondary school. Lauren scored a rare 100 per cent on her provincial exam in History 12. She was chosen as the president's scholar for UNBC and awarded a full scholarship for her undergraduate degree.

Created in 1873 by Lord Dufferin, Canada's third Governor General after Confederation, the awards are meant to encourage academic excellence across the nation. For more than 125 years, the Governor General's Academic Medals have recognized the outstanding scholastic achievements of students in Canada. Past recipients are former Prime Ministers Pierre Trudeau and British Columbian Kim Campbell.

B.C.'s students are among the best in the world. Since 1984, almost 6,000 B.C. students have received the Governor General's Bronze Academic Medal. This level of achievement shows the commitment of parents, teachers, principals, educators, trustees and support staff is paying off. One of our government's goals is to make B.C. the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. Students like Lauren are helping us reach our goal through her exceptional academic achievements.

Sharing the Dream

Education Minister Shirley Bond joined students in B.C., Canada and abroad for an opportunity to interview Olympic gold-medallist Carol Huynh as part of the first Sharing the Dream webcast at Heritage Woods Secondary school in Port Moody on Nov. 12. Students from Prince George led the first webcast with Huynh, while students from anywhere in the world could email questions during the live interview through www.sharingthedream.gov.bc.ca. (l-r Todd Bethune, Daniella Salazar, Carol Huynh, Education Minister Shirley Bond, Brent Greenless, Lauren Bone) Read more.

HOT TOPIC

Recent reports of "National Kick a Ginger Day," an online campaign urging students to kick a person with red hair are shocking. Clearly, bullying is not appropriate. In fact, I am appalled that a campaign of this nature was even developed.

As a result of the events last week, ministry staff is contacting all school districts to remind them of the Ministry's zero-tolerance policy against bullying and the legislated requirement to have Codes of Conduct in place to protect the safety of students.

This government takes the issue of bullying seriously—that's why this year we proclaimed a province-wide anti-bullying day to take a stand against bullying. In 2007, the Province passed legislation requiring boards of education to have codes of conduct that meet provincial standards. These codes of conduct include anti-bullying policies. This ensures that boards of education create standards for appropriate school behaviour throughout B.C.

The Ministry of Education document "Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide" that was updated in November 2008 is designed to help schools provide an environment where students feel safe and can focus on improving achievement. The guide includes provincial standards that help all schools develop codes of conduct that are clear, widely communicated and consistently reinforced, no matter where you go to school in B.C.

In addition, the Province has committed $5 million over five years to

implement the Roots of Empathy program in B.C. schools and over $1 million to implement the Seeds of Empathy program for preschoolers. The program helps children develop social skills, reduce aggression and develop positive attitudes towards their peers. Since 2000, Roots of Empathy and Seeds of Empathy programs have reached more than 60,275 students in B.C.

Student safety is a top priority for this government. Students need to be safe in order to learn. As Minister of Education and as a parent – I would urge parents to be active in the choices their children make, including online campaigns of this nature.

Green Tips

When I talk to students all over the province, they tell me that they are very concerned about the environment. This is a timely subject right now as over three million tonnes of garbage have already been sent to B.C. landfills this year. This month we are suggesting some green tips to help parents and students find ways to reduce, reuse and recycle:

- Walk or bike to school.
- Use both sides of the paper.
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth.
- Lower the thermostat by three degrees in winter and you can save up to 10 per cent on your heating bill.
- Try to further reduce materials going into landfills by composting at home

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